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(54) Machine or terminal for use in a game of chance, particularly bingo

(57) Machine or terminal for use in a game of chance, particularly bingo, comprising: a first permanent memory carrier which contains at least the logic programme of operation and the identification and exact composition of the possible cards utilised for each bingo hall; a second temporary memory carrier which progressively stores at least the identification number of the card or cards which the player is using in each game and the numbers which are being called; acoustic devices (4) and/or visual devices (5) which inform the player of the winning of a prize; digit keys (20) and function keys (21); means for controlling the setting in action of the machine of optical, magnetic or mechanical nature possibly for insertion in a slot (8); and means for data input/output connection with a central data processor which can run the game when the machine is just to be a terminal.

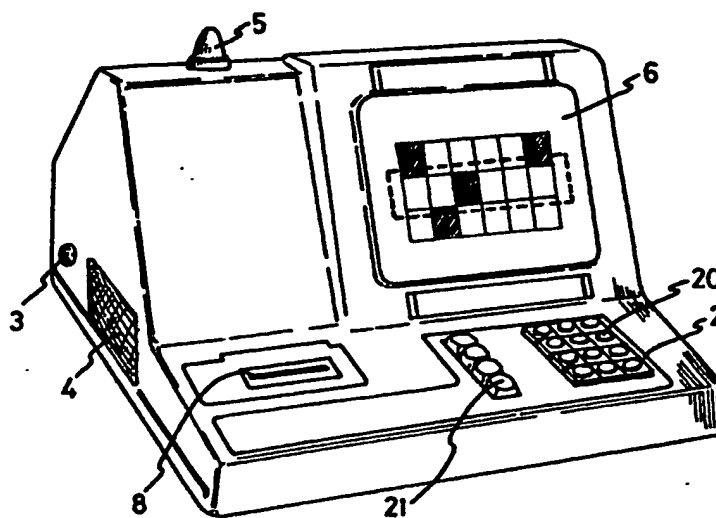
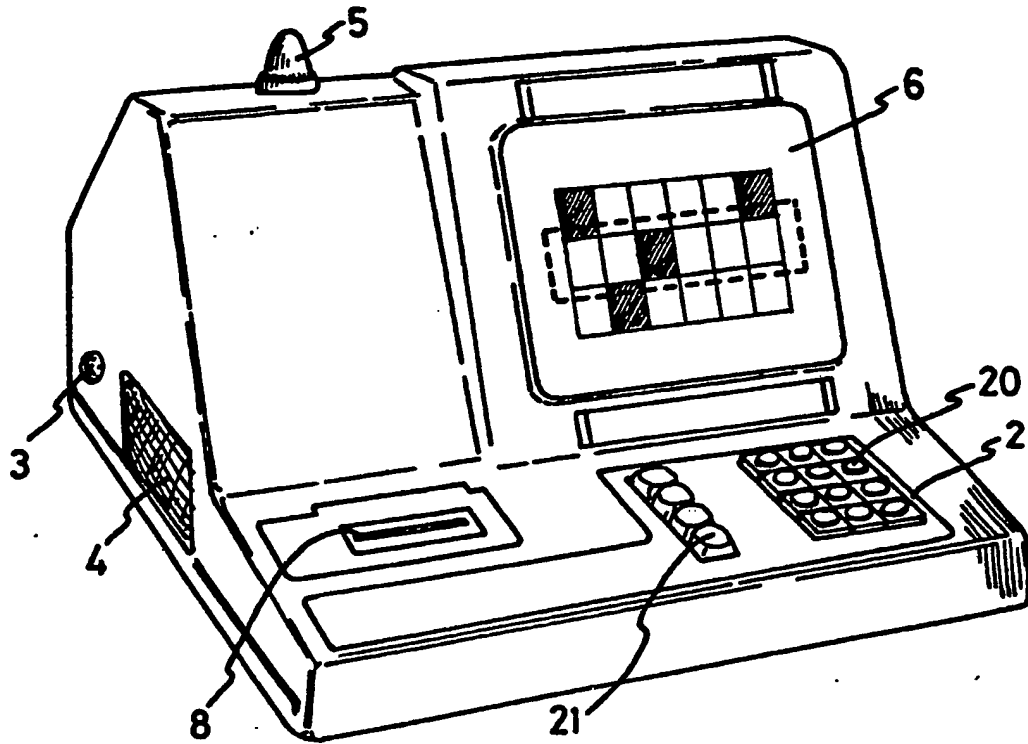
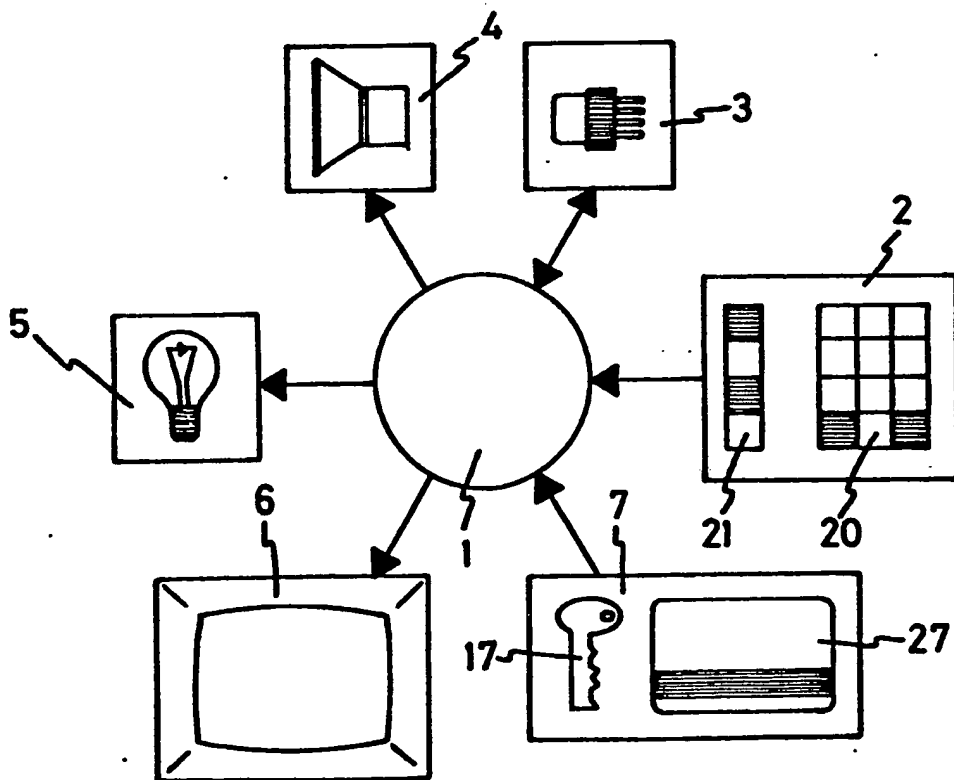


Fig.1

The drawings originally filed were informal and the print here reproduced is taken from a later filed formal copy.

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Fig. 1Fig. 2

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SPECIFICATION

Machine or terminal for use in a game of chance, particularly bingo

- 5 The present invention relates to a machine or terminal for use in a game of chance, particularly bingo.

- As is known, the game of bingo pursues coincidence between a group of numbers played and other numbers determined at random. The numbers played are printed on a card, and one or more possibilities of prizes exist according to whether the randomly determined numbers coincide with the numbers appearing in one or more horizontal, vertical or diagonal lines of the card, or with all the numbers of the card. The composition of the group of numbers on each of the cards is calculated and determined in advance, each card being identifiable by a serial number.

- 20 Mechanisms and devices intended for the extraction of the numbers at random and for the visual display of those numbers on a common screen are described and available on the market.

- More recently mechanisms and devices have appeared with the purpose of aiding the player, but their operation is complicated or inadequate, since they are limited to signalling the coincidence of the randomly extracted numbers with numbers which appear on the cards which the player is using, and which have been previously and possibly incorrectly introduced by the player into the mechanism or device.

- With more detailed reference to the mechanics or rules of bingo, the game consists in acquiring one or more cards and progressively marking off the numbers printed thereon as coincidences are produced with the numbers extracted at random and called out by the caller or management of the game. This operation of marking off numbers requires particular attention by the player, which forms part of the entertainment, but implies a risk of error and limits the quantity of cards which the player can manage at the same time.

- A machine or terminal which avoids the physical operation of marking off a number on a card each time the number has been spotted among various numbers would be of great assistance, since without decreasing the attention and emotion of the player it would avoid seeking of the number and consequent errors while permitting the player to play a greater number of cards simultaneously.

- In accordance with the present invention, a machine or terminal for use in a game of chance, particularly bingo, comprises a data processor, a keyboard and a screen for the visual display of processed data, a first permanent memory carrier containing at least the logic programme of operation and the identification and exact composition of the possible cards, a second temporary memory carrier for progressively storing at least the identification of a particular card or cards which the player is to use in a game and the numbers determined during the game which are to be related to said particular card or cards, and means of an acoustic and/or visual nature for

informing the player of winning.

- Clearly, the introduction of data during the game is limited to the numbers which are being called out, and the possibility even exists that such introduction of data from the keyboard by the player can be avoided by means of the connection of the machine with a central board or data processor capable of running the game by monitoring the cards played, the numbers being drawn and the prizes won so that the machine functions as a terminal.

- Naturally, in this latter situation, the or each of the machines is connected to the central data processor by appropriate data input/output connection means.

- 80 Preferably, the keyboard includes function and keyboard error correction keys, and there are at least six function keys, including one intended for the correction of errors, as well as ten digit keys.

- The screen may be capable of successively visually displaying the line or lines, and the card or cards, of said particular card or cards, which are closest to winning, that is to say there may be a selective function which would be difficult or impossible for the player who is monitoring a high number of the cards.

- 90 Preferably, means for controlling the setting in action of the machine or terminal is provided. In one embodiment, the setting in action means is a magnetically or optically coded card or counter. In another embodiment, the setting in action means is a relieved or contoured card or key.

- It will be appreciated that, in games of the bingo type, the numbers may be replaced visually by, for example, differently coloured symbols corresponding to different digit keys on the keyboard, or different combinations of digit keys.

- An embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:—

- Figure 1 is a perspective view of a machine or terminal according to the invention; and

- Figure 2 is a diagram of the operative integration of the elements of the machine or terminal.

- 110 The machine or terminal according to the invention includes a central process unit 1 (CPU), essentially composed of a microprocessor and a memory carrier, which is connected by way of corresponding interfaces to the other elements of the machine or terminal.

- 115 As illustrated, the CPU 1 is associated with keyboard 2, with data input/output connection plug 3, with acoustic informer devices 4 and visual informer devices 5, with screen 6 and with coded operation-starting instrument 7.

- The keyboard 2 is composed of two classes or groups of keys, namely the numerical or digit keys 20 and the function and correction keys 21, among which the latter may be distinguished, as they are provided to permit the correction of errors, either earlier or recent, during the keyboard operation.

- The plug 3 will have the task of distributing the data input/output connection with a data processor or a central board for the control of the game in each bingo hall so that the necessity of the player keying

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the called-out numbers into the keyboard 2 may be avoided.

The instrument 7 for controlling the operation of the machine can be optical, or mechanical such as a
5 key 17 or card of specific form and profile, or magnetic such as coded card 27. Such elements will be acquired previously by the player and will grant him the faculty of playing a predetermined number of games and/or cards. It is understood that these
10 elements permitting the setting in action of the machine can be replaced by others and even be omitted.

One example of the operation of the machine or terminal according to the invention during a bingo game would be the following.

The player introduces the control instrument which he may have determined or selected, for example the magnetic card 27, into a slot or aperture 8 of the machine. The CPU 1 tests the
20 authenticity and validity of the card 27 and places the machine into the operating situation. Next the player introduces, with the keys 20, the serial or identification number of the card or cards which he is preparing to play, and by means of at least one of
25 the keys 21 indicates the commencement of play to the machine. The numbers called out by the caller will be continuously introduced by the player by means of the keyboard 2, and at the same time will be stored in the temporary memory of the machine,
30 which processes the information and successively represents on the screen 6 the line or lines, or the card, of those games which are closest to prize-winning. If in this operation the player should commit an error, the corresponding keys 21 for
35 correction or remedying of the error exist.

If, in the course of the game, one or more of the cards which the machine is playing should gain the prize for one or more lines or for bingo, the machine visually displays these cards on the screen 6, at the
40 same time connecting the signals 4 and 5 informing the player.

Furthermore, it will be possible at any moment, by pressing the appropriate function key 21, to display visually other cards, or at the end of the game to re-
45 examine the called numbers, or finally to obtain statistical data of the prizes and numbers of the session.

The possibility of connection of each machine with a central game board or data processor, by
50 means of the connection plug 3, presumes that the player is limiting himself to contemplating, on the screen 6, the progress of his cards in the course of the game, since in this case the machine is a

terminal automatically receiving the called
55 numbers.

CLAIMS

1. A machine or terminal for use in a game of chance, particularly bingo, comprising a data
60 processor, a keyboard and a screen for the visual display of processed data, a first permanent memory carrier containing at least the logic programme of operation and the identification and exact composition of the possible cards, a second
65 temporary memory carrier for progressively storing at least the identification of a particular card or cards which the player is to use in a game and the numbers determined during the game which are to be related to said particular card or cards, and
70 means of an acoustic and/or visual nature for informing the player of winning.

2. A machine or terminal according to claim 1, in which the keyboard includes function and keyboard error correction keys.

75 3. A machine or terminal according to claim 2, in which there are at least six function keys, including one intended for the correction of errors, as well as ten digit keys.

4. A machine or terminal according to any
80 preceding claim, in which the screen is capable of successively visually displaying the line or lines, and the card or cards, of said particular card or cards which are closest to winning.

5. A machine or terminal according to any
85 preceding claim, in which means for controlling the setting in action of the machine or terminal is provided.

6. A machine or terminal according to claim 5, in which the setting in action means is a magnetically
90 or optically coded card or counter.

7. A machine or terminal according to claim 5, in which the setting in action means is a relieved or contoured card or key.

8. A machine or terminal according to any
95 preceding claim, in which data input/output connection means is provided for connection with a central data processor capable of running the game.

9. A machine or terminal for use in a game of chance, particularly bingo, and substantially as
100 hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

10. A plurality of machines or terminals according to claim 8 or claim 9 when connected to a central data processor which monitors the cards played, the
105 numbers being drawn and the prizes won so that the machines function as terminals.